

[Mr. Earl Heath]

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER F. W. Kaul & L. A. Rollins ADDRESS Hastings, Neb

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NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mr. Earl Heath, Hastings, Nebraska

Story No. 1

"When I was in the twenties, I went to Prague, Okla. Prague was a good town. We had no autos in those horse and buggy days. One of our greatest amusements was quail hunting. We would harness a team, hitch it to the buggy and drive out into the country a short distance. Then we would dismount and walk one of us on each side of the rig and shoot quails as they flew up, while the horses would draw the rig slowly along the road. Usually we quit shooting when we had bagged about a peck of the birds and go home and feather them, when the women would prepare them. Such short quail hunts were great sport and real amusement."

Story No. 2

"The worst experience I ever had was to get lost at night. It happened near Prague, Okla. I had a date with a girl. It was on a Sunday evening. I hitched my team to my top buggy and started for her home. A rain storm came up. I had to cross a creek like river known as the Deep river. The water in this stream was always of a reddish color. The river wasn't any bigger than our [?] river here in Adams County. Of course I got soaked. My new suit was a mess. It was dark as pitch. I drove on a ways, when [????] that I was lost. The team stopped near a building which I found to be an old ice house. I had a few dry matches in

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my match case. I left my team standing and walked about looking for a road lightning a match now and then. It seemed to get darker every time I had ignited a match. I couldn't find a road. I started to go back to the team and buggy. I found that I had lost my direction back. I couldn't find them. It seemed as though I had been walking in a circle, then again it seemed as though I might have been walking away further from them. My matches were all gone. My clothes were wet. I was lost. My team and buggy were lost. It was pitch dark. I am telling you, I was in a terrible fix. There I stood, lost in a dark rainy night, covered with wet clothes, without team or rig. I didn't know what to do. To make things worse it was pouring down all the while.

After two hours I heard noise. It sounded as though something rattled. Believe me my eyes were at attention to await a reoccurring of the rattle for I had determined that it might have been caused by the rings on the harness of my horse. This proved to be the case and eventually helped me to relocate and find. I mounted the rig and drove on. After some time I spied a dim light at a distance. It was the light of a cattle-man's shack. He took me in and listened to my never-to-be-forgotten experiences of that night. Early the next morning I drove back to Prague of course without having seen my girl. I'll never forget that night."

Story No. 3

"At Prague, Okla., I worked in the postoffice during the day and helped out as clerk at the bank at night. The people of the country were good, hard workers, mostly farmers, some rancher. They [had?] their fun when they came to town. There was a dance every Saturday night. There were lots of drinking but few got real drunk. There was an Anti-Horse-Thief-Association here. All horses of its members were branded in the flanks. The association has a record of all branded horses. If a man was found with a stolen horse his trail was held at once by members of the association. If the thief was found guilty, he was done away with, either shot or lynched and horse returned to the owner."

Story No. 4

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"My biggest excitement happened at Straud, Okla., not far from Sprague, Okla., when the bank was robbed in July 6, 1901.

I was clerk at the bank. The night before, the boys needed crap money. I loaned them a good sum. The next morning two men entered the bank, pointed guns at me, who was alone at the bank. They made me lie down and tied me. They then took all the money, except one 5¢ piece.

The money that the crap players had borrowed the night before was saved for the boys paid it back as usual. So the robbers only got \$8,000."

Note: Mr. Heath had no titles for the above stories. Said "Just things that happened, that seem only yesterday to me."

Story No. 5

"When the railroad was built through Prague, work gangs of 50 to 75 men would come to town when they had been paid. It meant, good business for the local saloon. The bartender would set 'em up to the whole gang. Then he would point to two big fellows of his picking and say, "You and You." This meant the exhibition of the free-for-all-fight for the amusement of the whole gang. When the fight was over and the crowd had laughed it off between drinks, the keeper would repeat, "You and You," picking another pair to fight for the amusement of the crowd. The drinking and social fighting would continue throughout the night, when toward morning, the gang would depart in pairs for their bunks at the railroad construction quarters."